



Featured News:

- Parole Board Central Office to relocate
- April 21 Job Fair for ex-offenders at Quincy Career Center
- Boston Work Place Helps Offenders to Work (photos)

February, 2006

Communicating to Keep the Public Safe

Plymouth DA partners with Brockton Parole Office

Working with local police and the Plymouth County District Attorney's Office, the Region 7 [Brockton] Parole Office has greatly improved parolee surveillance in the 37 cities and towns the office covers. Under the leadership of Plymouth County District Attorney Timothy Cruz, the Brockton office has joined several information and service initiatives in the past three years.

One initiative funded by state and federal grant money pairs Region 7 parole officers with Brockton police officers. As a team, the officers make unannounced checks at a parolee's home or place of employment about once a week. In addition, parole officers send the photos and addresses of parolees to police.

The initiative lets the parolee



Career Counselor Anastasia Glenn (rear) meets with Yashana Williams to develop a customer action plan at the Work Place Career Center in Boston. Ms. Williams, who was recently released from MCI-Framingham, would like to find a job in customer service.

know that local law enforcement knows about their parole status, taking away their anonymity. Early one morning after a ride-along, Brockton police spotted a parolee known as Jerry B. on the streets of a high-crime, drug-infested neighborhood. Jerry was with a prostitute and appeared to be high. Police notified the Brockton Parole Office, which sent two officers to Jerry B.'s house later that morning. When questioned, Jerry admitted to using drugs and was brought into the parole office for an investigation.

'Impact Players,' another initiative started under District Attorney Cruz's leadership, brings key law enforcement officials to the table once a month to discuss the high impact criminal players in the Brockton area.

(continued on pg. 5)

Making Reentry Work: Boston Career Center Partners with Parole

With services like resume building, career counseling, and job search skills training, the 32 Career Centers throughout Massachusetts assist not only ex-offenders, but other residents, in finding and keeping jobs.

While all of the Career Centers play an important role in the Massachusetts Parole Board's Regional Reentry Center Initiative, the Work Place in Boston goes the

extra mile to assist ex-offenders and parolees, says Parole Board Director of Reemployment Dave Sullivan.

"People coming out of incarceration are people who need help doing the right thing," said Ellen Mason, the Senior Program Manager at the Work Place who makes a point of helping parolees and ex-offenders. "Change is not easy, and this is one of the

populations that has multiple barriers to change, from housing to education to family situations, along with substance abuse and everything else. One of the barriers that we can help with is not knowing how to write a resume or act during an interview," she said.

The Work Place formed a close connection with parole and probation five years ago when... (continued on pg. 6)

Chairman's Column

By Parole Board Chairman Maureen Walsh

In this February newsletter, I thought it would be helpful to highlight and forecast some of the internal work that is currently in progress in the Agency that sometimes is not as visible as what is done in the public arena.

First, I am happy to announce that Chief of Field Services Michael Brown has selected two outstanding parole officers, George Valentgas and Leila Carver, to join Darwin Bliss as Deputy Chiefs of Field Service! When the position was posted, the response was overwhelming from a number of individuals both inside and outside the Agency. The selection of these two individuals, who have built solid reputations and are well respected in the field, will be an incredible asset to the Field Services Division. Although it has taken some time in the coming, I am happy to report that field services is finally equipped with the management personnel to address the many issues at hand. Also, Marcia Curtin, Chief of Institutional Services, is in the final process of adding one Deputy Chief of Institutional Services for the southeastern area, and we hope to make an announcement of this selection in the next few weeks. Certainly the field and institutional services component of our agency is the backbone of our operations, and there is a strong desire on everyone's part to ensure proper staffing in order to accomplish our mission. On this note, within the next three weeks, we will be starting the training for ten new transitional parole officers who will be joining the Massachusetts Parole Board!

“Certainly the field and institutional services component of our agency is the backbone of our operations, and there is a strong desire on everyone's part to ensure proper staffing in order to accomplish our mission.”

--Parole Board Chairman Maureen Walsh on the recent hire of ten new transitional parole officers.

Second, I am pleased to report that we have signed a lease in Natick, Massachusetts and will be relocating our central office within the next few months. As many of us know, and others only appreciate from a distance, our current location on the grounds of the former Medfield State Hospital has certainly been challenging on many levels. However, with the support of many, we are excited about the move to Natick, as will once again have a centralized administrative unit and will be in a professional working environment. Once again, thank you to all central office employees who have worked in Medfield under various conditions and still have managed to get the job done.

Third, I want to congratulate parole officer Tina Hurley, who was notified that she was appointed by Lieutenant Governor Healey as the co-chair of the Justice and Accountability subgroup of the Governor's Commission on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. Tina has played an integral role in the important work of the Domestic Violence Commission which has been working tirelessly to address both sexual and domestic violence issues in the Commonwealth. Please congratulate Tina on her accomplishments!!

Q&A with Parole Board member Dan Dewey

Dan Dewey was appointed to the Massachusetts Parole Board in 1993. He was reappointed in 1997 and in 2002. Mr. Dewey received a bachelor's degree from Texas A&M University in Kingsville, Texas and a master's degree in criminal justice from Anna Maria College in Paxton, Massachusetts. Prior to being appointed to the board, he worked as a juvenile probation officer in Framingham, then as an adult probation officer in Marlboro and Quincy. Mr. Dewey is a United State Marine Corps Vietnam Veteran.



Q. Why did you apply for membership on the board?

A. I wanted to become a member of the Massachusetts Parole Board to be involved in community-based supervision at a different level. My professional career for two decades was working as a probation officer; most of that time doing juvenile and family work. I wanted to get on the management and decision-making level. Being on the Board allows me to work on community based supervision from a different perspective.

Q. What do you find most satisfying or enjoyable about being on the board?

A. The most satisfying part of being on the parole board is being involved in the reentry process. We release inmates who are ready for reentry in a manner that is consistent with public safety.

Q. What do you think is the most challenging aspect of the job?

A. The most challenging part of being on the board is dealing with a great volume of cases while insuring that there is no compromise of excellence.

Q. How do you think your prior experience has informed your work on the board?

A. My whole professional life has been focused on community-based supervision and the issues involved in reentry. I have a personal understanding of programs, agencies, and levels of government that provide both security and services to the public. I have the knowledge to make release decisions knowing the impact it will have on both the inmate and the community at large. I try to make decisions that are compatible with the welfare of society



Job Developer Dean Lymon (right) assists Sandra Diaz with finding a job at the Work Place on Winter Street in Boston. The Work Place, one of 32 state-sponsored Career Centers in Massachusetts, recently started a program for female ex-offenders known as the Women Offender Reentry Collaborative [WORC].



Work Place staff (from left) Women Offender Reentry Collaborative Coordinator Christina Bilotta, Job Developer Dean Lymon, Career Counselor Anastasia Glenn, and Career Counselor Alina Garner.

Parole Board to Hold Job Fair !

A job fair for ex-offenders will be held April 21 at the Quincy Career Center from 9 AM to 12 PM.

This is an opportunity for ex-offenders to meet potential employees and for employers to learn the benefits of hiring an ex-offender. The event will include information sessions about tax credits and the Federal Bonding Program.

Employers interested in attending may register by calling Anthony Cornetta at 617-725-3319, or Dave Sullivan at 617-626-5733. The registration deadline is April 7, 2006.

A mandatory job-readiness workshop will be held Thursday, April 13 at the Quincy Career Center one week before the job fair. The session is an opportunity for ex-offenders to polish their job seeking skills and resumes. Parole officers who know ex-offenders who would like to attend may contact Mr. Cornetta or Mr. Sullivan.

Offenders who cannot attend should meet with a case worker at JobNet or the Work Place in advance of the job fair. For more information, contact Tor Bosewell at JobNet or Ellen Mason at the Work Place, and mention the April 21 job fair.

Quincy Career Center
152 Parkingway
Quincy, MA 02169
617-745-4000

JobNet
210 South Street
Boston, MA. 02111
1-800-5JOBNET

The Work Place
29 Winter St., Fourth Floor
Boston, MA. 02108
1-800-436-WORK

Substance Abuse Counselors Assist Parolees at Regional Reentry Centers

New Site for Central Office!

Staff at the Parole Board Central Office are expected in late April/early May to relocate from the grounds of the decommissioned Medfield State Hospital to a new building in Natick.

The new office is nearly twice as big as the Medfield office, and will include a file room, a hearing room, a training room, a law library, a kitchen and staff area, a reception desk, a building security system, and a state of the art conference room.

The Parole Board Reentry Unit, a six-member staff located in the state transportation building, will also relocate to the Medfield office.

This is the final installment in a series of articles on the eight Substance Abuse Coordinators [SAC's] hired by the Massachusetts Parole Board as part of the Regional Reentry Center Initiative. The SAC's have been assigned at each of the eight regional parole offices. So far, Parole News has featured SAC's Lisa Jean, Region 6 (Lawrence), Linda Mazak, Region 1 (Quincy), Desiree Huff, Region 2 (Mattapan), and Steve Bisson, Region 9 (Framingham). The following article features SAC's Fred Sharp of Region 7 (Brockton), Pam Moore of Region 5 (Springfield), and Suzanne Lyons of Region 8 (New Bedford)

Region 7 SAC Fred Sharp began a career in human services in 1986, and in June, 2005 joined the South Middlesex Opportunity Council [SMOC], a service agency for low income people in

need. Prior to joining SMOC, Mr. Sharp worked as a counselor at a methadone clinic in Brockton. A licensed substance abuse counselor, he received a bachelor's degree in behavioral psychology from Suffolk University.

Mr. Sharp became frustrated with the way the medical community was handling addictions during the 1980's while working at Brockton Hospital. "People would overdose and die. There were groups of people dying. Nine people died from a bad batch of heroin," he said. The experience prompted him to pursue work in substance abuse counseling and human services.

The number of ex-offenders Mr. Sharp sees from day to day varies usually between four and nine. Most of them return after their first visit to access services

through the RRC.

Like the other SAC's, Mr. Sharp goes beyond his substance abuse and mental health counseling duties, assisting ex-offenders in finding jobs and fulfilling other life needs. "I have the desire to go the extra mile and give these people what they need so they can stop re-offending," said Mr. Sharp. "I want to put these people at ease. They have all this tension when they walk into the office," he said.

Before Region 5 SAC Pam Moore joined the Springfield Parole Office, she worked for Northern Educational Services, a substance abuse recovery program with a halfway house and outpatient component in Springfield. (continued on pg. 6)

Brockton Parole Officers connect with local law enforcement, community (continued from pg. 1)

...Representatives from the following offices come together: the Plymouth County District Attorney's Office, the U.S Attorney's Office, the Region 7 Parole Office, the Massachusetts State Police, federal agents, and probation. Parole Officers share with other law enforcement officials information regarding parolees, such as release dates, parole conditions, biographical information, and photographs. Impact Players is about three years old, and has greatly increased the surveillance and enforcement capacity of the Region 7 Parole Office.

For example, during a recent meeting, parole officers informed police that an offender with a history of firearms offenses had been released on parole. At 2 AM, the next morning, Brockton police spotted the man on the street, and recognized that his parole conditions stipulated a 10 PM curfew. Police stopped the parolee and discovered that he was in possession of a 9 millimeter semi-automatic weapon. He was arrested and sentenced to five years in prison. The stop would not have occurred if parole had not been sharing information with the Brockton Police Department, said Region 7 Parole Supervisor James McCarthy.

Providing services to parolees who want to get on the right track is another important aspect of public safety. Through a federal grant for collaboration with faith-based initiatives, Brockton parole officers recently began referring ex-offenders at the Regional Reentry Centers to the Mt. Moriah Baptist Church. The church assists offenders both inside and outside correctional facilities, providing anger management and substance abuse counseling, as well as housing opportunities. In addition, Brockton Substance Abuse Coordinator Fred Sharp leads a support meeting for substance abusers at Mt. Moriah on Wednesday nights.

Massachusetts Parole Board

Central Office

45 Hospital Road

Building B3

Medfield, MA. 02052

Phone: 508-242-8001

Fax: 508-242-8100



Parole Board Reentry Unit

10 Park Plaza, Suite 3720

Phone: 617-725-3317

Fax: 617-725-0260

Web: www.mass.gov/parole



Ex-offenders get job-ready at Work Place

(continued from pg. 1)

...Work Place staff began working in the Suffolk County House of Correction., assisting offenders with planning for employment on the outside. When the startup grants for the program ran out, the Work Place sought funding to keep working with the ex-offender population. "It's a niche of ours that we've created," said Ms. Mason, noting that parole and probation staff frequently call the Work Place for help when ex-offenders need work. "Some of the staff were a little bit hesitant...but now people don't bat an eyelash. These people are the customers we serve," she said. Building a relationship with parole and other law enforcement agencies has always been something I have stiven to do," said Ms.

Mason. "And it's always been a two-way street. Dave [Sullivan] helps us out, and [Region 1 Parole Officer] Tina Hurley has always been an angel. It's been a great relationship," she said.

Recently, the Work Place, along with Family Prison Ministry, the Department of Correction, and Community Resources for Justice, was awarded a Department of Labor grant earmarked for prisoner reentry.

The grant will fund a program for women coming out of incarceration called the Women Offender Reentry Collaborative. The program provides female ex-offenders with mentoring, group activities, clinical time, and substance abuse support. The Work Place will be in charge of getting the women ready for work by linking them

with a case manager/career counselor. "We work on the whole person, and get them into a place where it's possible to do a job search," said Ms. Mason.

The program will assist an estimated 100 women who have been released from prison within the past six months.

"We plan to have success with about 75 of the women," said Ms. Mason. Success will be measured by employment as well as family reunification and reduced recidivism, she noted. "We're measuring a lot of different parameters."

As part of the effort, the Work Place is doing regular shifts inside MCI-Framingham and South Middlesex Correctional Center.

Substance Abuse Counselors Offer Services at Regional Reentry Centers

(continued from pg. 5)

...Before that, Ms. Moore worked for the Massachusetts Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children, the DARE Program, and the Department of Social Services. She received a master's degree in psychology and education from Cambridge college. In her work as a mental health counselor, Ms. Moore increasingly began to find that many of her patients were struggling with psychological issues, as well as drug and alcohol addictions.

"It was a natural offshoot.



Depression symptoms can be part of the withdrawal from drug use," she said.

Like her colleagues. Ms. Moore meets with a different number of clients each day, providing them with case management, MassHealth, counseling, and other services. Most importantly, she tries to encourage what she calls "self-advocacy," encouraging them to change their behavior, acquire coping skills, and

find other ways to deal with stress.

"Once they realize I'm not a parole officer, they're more willing to be honest. Once you have their trust they start telling."

Before coming to parole, New Bedford SAC Suzanne Lyons was a nurse in a methadone clinic, working with offenders at MCI Plymouth in Carver. She also worked at the David R. Nelson Correctional Addiction Center in New Bedford and the Emerson House in Falmouth. Ms. Lyons has a bachelor's degree in sociology with a concentration in psychology and criminal justice studies.